

Faced with constant fear and terror I commend the Israelis for creating and maintaining a viable democracy, founded on liberty, justice, and peace. They have overcome and accomplished so much in a short amount of time. Lasting peace between Israel and its neighbors remains the ultimate goal and peace has been achieved in certain regions. Together, we can make realize the ultimate goal of peace with all of Israel's neighbors and share legitimate security and success.

Mazel Tov!

TRIBUTE TO RETIRING SHERIFF
JOHN HEMEYER

HON. IKE SKELTON

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 27, 2004

Mr. SKELTON. Mr. Speaker, it has come to my attention that my good friend John Hemeyer will retire as Sheriff of Cole County, Missouri. He has held the office since 1986.

Sheriff Hemeyer has had a long and respected career in law enforcement. On the job, he is respected as a co-worker and boss. He has shown concern and a willingness to help those with whom he serves. He has personally touched the lives of countless Cole County residents. He has been described as always willing to enter any situation first, which is an admirable trait for those who serve the community as first responders.

For almost two decades, Sheriff Hemeyer has been willing to let those he serves, the people of Cole County, make the decision as to whether or not he would return as sheriff, and the voters have asked him to stay every time. This year, he has decided to take a well-deserved retirement. His decision to not seek another term was met with sadness and an outpouring of appreciation for his years of dedicated service and a job well done.

Mr. Speaker, I am sure the Members of the House will join me in honoring Sheriff Hemeyer for his years of service and in wishing him all the best in the days ahead.

CONGRATULATING WILLIAM F.
ALDINGER

HON. MARK STEVEN KIRK

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 27, 2004

Mr. KIRK. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to express my congratulations to a business leader from the 10th Congressional District of Illinois, Mr. William F. Aldinger, CEO of Household International—and now HSBC North America—on his recognition by the Friends of Adam Smith (FOAS) for the 2004 Business Citizen medal tonight.

I have had the pleasure to get to know Bill over the past several years and I am thrilled the FOAS has recognized his leadership in community service, involvement and public policy. By visiting their headquarters in Prospect Heights, Illinois, to learn how they serve over 50 million customers, I have seen how Household has helped empower its employees to play a more active role in politics and good government by conducting internal voter registration drives.

With almost 6,000 employees in Illinois—and 50,000 throughout the United States—I have seen first hand how Household-HSBC is active in their community under Bill's leadership. Whether with Junior Achievement, the American Cancer Society, Neighborhood Housing Services of Chicago, Habitat for Humanity and many more, Household-HSBC employees are constantly working to make their communities better places to live. Finally, I believe the Business Citizen medal is not just an award for Bill Aldinger, but all his employees. Congratulations Bill, and all members of the Household-HSBC North America team, and keep up the great work.

ARMENIAN GENOCIDE

HON. PETER J. VISCLOSKEY

OF INDIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 27, 2004

Mr. VISCLOSKEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in solemn memorial to the estimated 1.5 million men, women, and children who lost their lives during the Armenian Genocide. As in the past, I am pleased to join so many distinguished House colleagues on both sides of the aisle in ensuring that the horrors wrought upon the Armenian people are never repeated.

On April 24, 1915, over 200 religious, political, and intellectual leaders of the Armenian community were brutally executed by the Turkish government in Istanbul. Over the course of the next 8 years, this war of ethnic genocide against the Armenian community in the Ottoman Empire took the lives of over half the world's Armenian population.

Sadly, there are some people who still deny the very existence of this period which saw the institutionalized slaughter of the Armenian people and dismantling of Armenian culture. To those who would question these events, I point to the numerous reports contained in the U.S. National Archives detailing the process that systematically decimated the Armenian population of the Ottoman Empire. However, old records are too easily forgotten—and dismissed. That is why we come together every year at this time: to remember in words what some may wish to file away in archives. This genocide did take place, and these lives were taken. That memory must keep us forever vigilant in our efforts to prevent these atrocities from ever happening again.

I am proud to note that Armenian immigrants found, in the United States, a country where their culture could take root and thrive. Most Armenians in America are children or grandchildren of the survivors, although there are still survivors among us. In my district in Northwest Indiana, a vibrant Armenian-American community has developed and strong ties to Armenia continue to flourish. My predecessor in the House, the late Adam Benjamin, was of Armenian heritage, and his distinguished service in the House serves as an example to the entire Northwest Indiana community. Over the years, members of the Armenian-American community throughout the United States have contributed millions of dollars and countless hours of their time to various Armenian causes. Of particular note are Mrs. Vicki Hovanessian and her husband, Dr. Raffi Hovanessian, residents of Indiana's First

Congressional District, who have continually worked to improve the quality of life in Armenia, as well as in Northwest Indiana. Three other Armenian-American families in my congressional district, Dr. Aram and Mrs. Seta Semerdjian, Dr. Heratch and Mrs. Sonya Doumanian, and Dr. Ara and Mrs. Rosy Yeretsian, have also contributed greatly toward charitable works in the United States and Armenia. Their efforts, together with hundreds of other members of the Armenian-American community, have helped to finance several important projects in Armenia, including the construction of new schools, a mammography clinic, and a crucial roadway connecting Armenia to Nagorno Karabagh.

In the House, I have tried to assist the efforts of my Armenian-American constituency by continually supporting foreign aid to Armenia. This past year, with my support, Armenia received \$84 million in U.S. aid to assist economic and military development. In addition, on April 16, 2004, I joined several of my colleagues in signing the letter to President Bush urging him to honor his pledge to recognize the Armenian Genocide.

The Armenian people have a long and proud history. In the fourth century, they became the first nation to embrace Christianity. During World War I, the Ottoman Empire was ruled by an organization known as the Young Turk Committee, which allied with Germany. Amid fighting in the Ottoman Empire's eastern Anatolian provinces, the historic heartland of the Christian Armenians, Ottoman authorities ordered the deportation and execution of all Armenians in the region. By the end of 1923, virtually the entire Armenian population of Anatolia and western Armenia had either been killed or deported.

While it is important to keep the lessons of history in mind, we must also remain committed to protecting Armenia from new and more hostile aggressors. In the last decade, thousands of lives have been lost and more than a million people displaced in the struggle between Armenia and Azerbaijan over Nagorno-Karabagh. Even now, as we rise to commemorate the accomplishments of the Armenian people and mourn the tragedies they have suffered, Azerbaijan, Turkey, and other countries continue to engage in a debilitating blockade of this free nation.

Consistently, I have testified before the Foreign Operations Appropriations Subcommittee on the important issue of bringing peace to a troubled area of the world. I continued my support for maintaining the level of funding for the Southern Caucasus region of the Independent States (IS), and of Armenia in particular. In addition, on February 26, 2004, I joined several of my colleagues in sending a letter to President Bush urging him to ensure parity in military assistance between Armenia and Azerbaijan.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleagues, Representatives JOE KNOLLENBERG and FRANK PALLONE, for organizing this special order to commemorate the 89th Anniversary of the Armenian Genocide. Their efforts will not only help bring needed attention to this tragic period in world history, but also serve to remind us of our duty to protect basic human rights and freedoms around the world.

ISRAEL INDEPENDENCE DAY

HON. ROBERT MENENDEZ

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 27, 2004

Mr. MENENDEZ. Mr. Speaker, today, I am proud to join my colleagues in the United States Congress and world leaders in celebrating the creation of the State of Israel on this 56th anniversary of Israel's Independence Day. On this historic day, we honor the achievements of the Jewish people and the Jewish state, and salute a young and proud nation that has accomplished so much in so little time.

In the 56 years since independence, Israel has welcomed immigrants from all corners of the world as her population grew from 806,000 to 6,780,000 people, including over a million new immigrants from the former Soviet Union. Israel today is a vibrant democracy, the only democracy in the Middle East, and a world leader in technology and agricultural innovation for arid regions.

We must remember that these great achievements have come at a great cost. More than 20,000 Israel Defense Force members have died fighting for the cause of a Jewish state in the years since the war of independence—over 185 Israeli soldiers in the past year alone, since the last Remembrance and Independence Days.

And we must also honor and remember those innocent civilians who have been killed by terrorists trying to destroy the State of Israel and her people. In the last year, at least 176 people were murdered and 906 wounded in terrorist attacks.

On this Day of Independence, the United States of America and Israel stand side-by-side in our commitment to democracy, to peace, and to the State of Israel. The United States will never flinch and will never waiver in its support for the safety and security of the State of Israel and of her people.

A SPECIAL TRIBUTE TO LIEUTENANT COLONEL RICHARD W. LAUGHLIN ON THE OCCASION OF HIS RETIREMENT

HON. PAUL E. GILLMOR

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 27, 2004

Mr. GILLMOR. Mr. Speaker, it is my distinct privilege to stand before my colleagues in the House to pay tribute to a special person in Ohio's Fifth Congressional District. This year, Lieutenant Colonel Richard W. Laughlin, Professor of Military Science and Leadership at Bowling Green State University, will retire after 20 years of distinguished service in the United States Army.

Mr. Speaker, Lieutenant Colonel Laughlin graduated from the United States Military Academy at West Point in May of 1984. His hard work and dedication at West Point, the Army's pinnacle of leadership, was exceptional. Upon graduation, he branch selected artillery.

LTC Laughlin graduated from the Field Artillery Officers Basic Course in 1985, and his competence and professionalism in that field

served the Nation well as he advanced in rank. Over a period of 8 years, serving at Fort Sill, Oklahoma and at Fort Richardson, Alaska, LTC Laughlin was promoted to first lieutenant and then to captain while serving as Fire Direction Officer, Battery Executive Office, S2, Headquarters Battery Commander, and as assistant S3.

Assigned to the University of Pittsburgh as an assistant professor for military science in 1993, LTC Laughlin was awarded the Governor's Cup for the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania as the best ROTC battalion in the state in 1994. While serving as Chief of Operations for the 1st Cavalry Division at Fort Hood, Texas, he was promoted to the rank of major. He then transferred to Fort Hood, Texas to serve as Rear Detachment Commander, 82nd Field Artillery. Under his able leadership, the 82nd trained and deployed thousands of combat-ready soldiers to the Bosnian conflict in 1999.

LTC Laughlin began his current assignment as a Professor of Military Science at BGSU in 2000. Under his guidance, the ROTC program has been forged into a respected hallmark of the University, with program members participating in numerous campus events. LTC Laughlin's 20-year commitment of distinguished service to his country leaves as its legacy a stronger Army of able combat-ready forces, and a generation of students inspired by his dedication and courage.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in paying special tribute to the steadfast patriotism and unwavering spirit of Lieutenant Colonel Richard C. Laughlin. I am confident that his example will serve as an inspiration to a new generation of soldiers who, like him, will be brave and vigilant guardians for the United States and its citizens. May he now enjoy the freedoms and liberties that he has so ably helped to protect over his distinguished career.

ARMENIAN GENOCIDE

HON. MICHAEL M. HONDA

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 27, 2004

Mr. HONDA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to ask the Members of the House to join us in recognizing past instances of genocide and reaffirming our Nation's commitment to never again allow the perpetration of such atrocities anywhere on this earth. House Resolution 193 appropriately reaffirms America's obligation to international genocide conventions, and underscores the importance of recognizing past crimes against humanity, including the Holocaust and the Armenian, Cambodian, and Rwandan genocides.

We all know that silence in the face of genocide only encourages those who would commit such atrocities in the future. Israel Charney, the noted genocide and Holocaust scholar, has written extensively about the psychology of genocide denial. He has explained to the world what we should all know from history: to deny genocide is to celebrate the mass murder and to endorse the doctrine of corrupt power that brought about the destruction in the first place. To erase agonizing memories of genocide only mocks the sensibilities of the victims and their descend-

ents—in essence, once again, victimize the victims.

For this reason, America must recognize the Turkish massacre and displacement of Armenians as an act of genocide. The House Judiciary Committee, upon its unanimous approval of the Genocide Resolution, described the Armenian Genocide in the following terms:

Beginning in 1915, the Islamic Turkish state of the Ottoman Empire sought to end the collective existence of the Christian Armenian population. From 1915 through 1918, during World War I, the Ottoman Empire subjected the Armenian people to deportation, expropriation, abduction, torture, massacre, and starvation. The atrocities were renewed between 1920 and 1923. It is estimated that one and a half million Armenians were killed out of over two million Armenians who had lived in the Ottoman Empire. It should be noted that these activities ceased with the institution of the new Republic of Turkey in October, 1923.

U.S. recognition of the Armenian genocide is long past due. By failing to admit and recognize atrocities that clearly took place we undermine our Nation's credibility and commitment to combat genocide. On April 24, President Bush issued his annual message in remembrance of the victims of the Armenian Genocide—only he failed to use the word "genocide." In failing to refer to the Armenian Genocide accurately, he has turned his back on his own campaign pledge and on 190 Members of Congress who want the Armenian Genocide recognized.

It is not enough to say "never again." We must take concrete steps to give it meaning and to bolster our own resolve. Passing House Resolution 193 is a small but important step in this ongoing effort to thwart those who would commit genocide. It is the least we can do for the millions who have been killed in Turkey, Germany, Rwanda, and Cambodia. Understanding the lessons of these tragedies will help prevent future crimes against humanity.

Mr. Speaker, I appreciate this opportunity to honor the victims of genocide, and to urge my colleagues to always remain cognizant of the pledge our Nation has made to prevent future acts of genocide.

INTRODUCTION OF THE FEDERAL DISASTER CONSUMER PROTECTION ACT

HON. MADELEINE Z. BORDALLO

OF GUAM

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 27, 2004

Ms. BORDALLO. Mr. Speaker, today I am introducing legislation that would protect the credit histories of consumers residing in areas where damages caused by a disaster impede the efficient payment of debts. My bill would provide an important safeguard for individuals living in disaster-prone regions in order to ensure that their financial histories are not adversely affected by an inability to make prompt payments during and in the immediate aftermath of a Federally Declared Disaster Area.

I am concerned that public law does not provide a consistent legal means for consumers to rectify credit discrepancies occurring during a period in which their residence was included in a Federally Declared Disaster